

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00

SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 H-02 /051 R

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S/NM - RDUGSTAD

CUSTOMS - PBROUGH

ARA/EP - JHALLIOTO

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R 300046Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY QUITO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, EC

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - PROGRESSIVE U.S. CLEARANCE FOR
ECUATORIANA

REF : STATE 165326

1. FOLLOWING IS STATUS REPORT EFFORT OBTAIN CUSTOMS
APPROVAL OF PROGRESSIVE CLEARANCE FOR ECUATORIANA.

A. CUSTOMS REMAINS RELUCTANT GRANT APPROVAL, PARTICULARLY
IN ABSENCE ANY SHOWING THAT IN FACT ECUATORIANA HAS
SUFFERED SUBSTANTIALITY FROM LACK OF PRECLEARANCE.

B. CONTRARY OUR EARLIER UNDERSTANDING, DRUG CONTROL IS
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PROBLEM OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE IN THIS CONTEXT. THERE

HAVE BEEN THREE SEIZURES OF COCAINE THIS YEAR IN MIAMI FROM ECUATORIANA PASSENGERS, ONE ON DAY BEFORE FLIGHT 524 INAUGURAL. (AIRLINE WAS NOT INFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH USUAL PRACTICE WHEN THERE NO EVIDENCE ITS EMPLOYEES EITHER IMPLICATED OR NEGLIGENT.) COCAINE MAY HAVE COME FROM ECUADOR (CUSTOMS STATISTICS SHOW 41 SEIZURES OF COCAINE ORIGINATING IN ECUADOR DURING 1974-75), BUT IT COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE COME FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE, SUCH AS A PASSENGER BOARDING IN COLOMBIA (THE SOURCE OF 224 SEIZURES DURING THE SAME PERIOD).

C. MIAMI AIRPORT DOES NOT HAVE PROPER FACILITIES TO KEEP TRANSIT PASSENGERS BOTH STERILE AND COMFORTABLE. CUSTOMS AND AIRLINES DO BEST THEY CAN IN REGARD TO PROGRESSIVE CLEARANCE APPROVED BEFORE SMUGGLING THROUGH MIAMI BECAME A SERIOUS PROBLEM, BUT CUSTOMS DOES NOT WISH TO COMPOUND ITS DIFFICULTIES.

D. CUSTOMS CONCEDED THAT IN PRACTICE CLEARANCE TIME EXCEEDED ONE HOUR ON FIVE OCCASIONS BETWEEN MAY 7 AND JUNE 30, AND CUSTOMS FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE TIME TO AND FROM AIRPLANE.

3. IN EFFORT DISCOVER WHAT HARM, IF ANY, THESE DELAYS HAVE CAUSED ECUATORIANA, DEPT CONTACTED PHILIP SCHLEIT, ECUATORIANA'S WASHINGTON LAWYER, O/A JULY 12 TO INQUIRE IF ECUATORIANA HAD HAD ANY DIFFICULTY IN TURNING AROUND BEFORE MIDNIGHT IN NEW YORK, AND IF SO THE SPECIFIC DATES. SCHLEIT SAID HE WOULD GET THE INFORMATION BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN BACK IN TOUCH.

F. SCHLEIT ALSO COMMENTED THAT MUCH OF JUSTIFICATION FOR ECUATORIANA REQUEST HAS BEEN LOST BECAUSE, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS, MOST NORTHBOUND TRAVELERS ON FLIGHT 524 LEAVE THE FLIGHT IN MIAMI.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE INFORM APPROPRIATE ECUADOREAN OFFICIALS THAT IN EFFORT PERSUADE CUSTOMS TO CHANGE ITS MIND, DEPT HAS BEEN TRYING, SO FAR UNSUCCESSFULLY, TO OBTAIN INFORMATION OUTLINED ABOVE FROM ECUATORIANA. DEPT WILL CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE. FYI: DEPT UNDERSTANDS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ECUATORIANA NO LONGER FEELS AS STRONGLY AS BEFORE ABOUT MATTER SINCE IT HAS TURNED OUT THAT MOST PASSENGERS ON THIS PARTICULAR FLIGHT ARE DESTINED FOR MIAMI, NOT NEW YORK. IT IS PROBABLY BETTER NOT TO STRESS THIS POINT TO GOE OFFICIALS HOWEVER, SINCE IT MIGHT PROVOKE GOE TO CHANGE ECUADOREAN POSITION TO ONE OF "SERIOUS CONCERN" THUS ESCALATING PROBLEM RATHER THAN HELPING MATTERS. END FYI.

3. YOU MAY ALSO WISH, IF YOU FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL,
TO BRING THE DRUG CONTROL ASPECTS OF THIS PROBLEM TO
THE ATTENTION OF THESE OFFICIALS OR TO THAT OF APPROPRIATE
GOE CUSTOMS OFFICIALS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN U.S.
CUSTOMS TRAINING COURSES.

4. KEEP DEPT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. WE EXPECT NO
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN WASHINGTON, AT LEAST UNLESS AND
UNTIL WE HEAR FROM SCHLEIT. KISSINGER

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